



CONSERVATION
AREAS WIRRAL

Promoting & Protecting in Partnership

W: www.cawirral.org.uk | E: enquiries@cawirral.org.uk

MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION AREAS WIRRAL (CAW) 2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on 19 April 2018 at The Lyceum, Port Sunlight

PRESENT: Alan Chape (Chairman), John Pyke (Treasurer), Peter Bolt, Alan Thomson, Kay Crook, Chris Moore, Gillian Bolt, Lizzie Heywood (Port Sunlight), Ite Rafferty (Barnston), Dennis Clegg (Heswall), Jess Malpas (Wirral Council), Graham Arnold (Birkenhead Park), Roger Lane (Heswall), Felicity Povoas (Frankby), Malcolm Pembridge (Frankby), John Marsland (Lower Bebington), Claire Marsland (Lower Bebington), Cllr Jerry Williams, Rod Tann (Wirral Society), Philip Barton (Hamilton Square), Glynn Parry (Bromborough Pool), Maureen More (Clifton Park), Margaret Grundy (Clifton Park), Eileen Branscombe (Clifton Park), Patrick Toosey (Oxton), John Moffat (Flaybrick), Mary Brown (Mountwood), Jeff Willis (Oxton), Eileen Willshaw (Wirral Council), Alexander McMorrان (Rock Park), Teo Hauskeller (Rock Park).

1 Alan Chape welcomed everyone to the meeting. He also thanked Port Sunlight Trust for allowing us to use the Lyceum for the meeting.

2 Apologies

David Allan (Eastham), Gary Pratt (Barnston), Richard More (Clifton Park), John Cocker (Bidston), Roger Merry (Mountwood), Elizabeth Davey, Les Spencer (Saughall Massie), Eve Sorrell (Caldy), Paul Wilson (Magazines), Paul Harris (Port Sunlight Trust), Robin Tutchings (Wirral Council), Steve Anderson (Heswall), Richard Hoppins (West Kirby)

3 Chairman's Report.

This had been circulated in advance of the meeting but Alan Chape presented it in Powerpoint form. *(Printed copies had been sent out in advance to all members and were available in the hall.)*

Additional points included:

a) Alan talked about the new Growth Company and its possible impact. He also mentioned the issue of the Wirral Council having no Development Plan which has resulted in the Government potentially sending in a senior Planning Officer to examine the department. One of the major disappointments had been the Eastham rugby club planning application which, surprisingly, had been agreed by all the political parties on the planning committee. The housing development will impact the Eastham Conservation Area and is in direct opposition to the Management Plan.

b) Peter Bolt then updated the meeting about the blue plaque programme which was funded by monies from the Council's Heritage Fund. Although Wirral Council will support four this year, Peter has also been asked to supply and install other plaques which have been paid for privately. This year will see plaques going up for Mary Ann Mercer, Wirral's first female Mayor, Alan Rouse the climber, Lucy & Littler, the architects for Flaybrick and possibly John Ball, 8 x winner of the Amateur Golf championships and a member of the Royal Liverpool Golf Club in Hoylake.

c) Alan Thomson reported on Rock Park's efforts to create the CA as a visitor destination through organised walks, beach clean-ups and other marketing. They have also started looking into the archives regarding some "battles" in the past ie the New Ferry by-pass, the boundary issue which was re-drawn to include the beach front down to the lower water line and the planned extension of the oil terminal which was defeated. The group wants to see if there are any lessons in those campaigns which can be used now.

d) Kay Crook reported on the difficult issues they were having with trees in Mountwood:

"It is incredible to imagine that Mountwood has survived the detrimental damage from two World Wars. Cocooned in ancient woodland, properties, some of the finest examples of circa 20th century domestic architecture on Merseyside, highlighted by Sir Nicholas Pevsner in his book and Donald Insall architects in Chester, have withstood the test of time.

The majority of owners highly respect Conservation Area status with sympathetic building restoration and judicious pruning of their trees. Sadly however, we have been plagued by new residents moving into the area with scant regard for preservation and enhancement. Some have been sequentially removing limbs and felling trees without permission. Others have found opportunity for breaching Planning Application regulations.

Residents are not alone in their abuse of the system. A vast area of aged trees was demolished at Prenton's Water Tower site. Further to several fraught meetings with United Utilities, they have apologised profusely and we are currently being offered an area of replant and further compensation. The unique structure, built in the late 1800's, is now in the pipeline for listing.

Tree surgeons from Mancoed, employed by Wirral Borough Council, were "arrested" in their attempt to "lop" London Plane street trees within the Conservation Area. This grave issue spearheaded subsequent meetings with Wirral Tree Wardens, Wirral Borough Council and lastly but by no means least, the launch of W.I.T – Wirral Initiative Trees at the BBC Radio 4 "Question Time" event at Ness Gardens, co-ordinated by Roger Merry of the Mountwood Conservation Area Committee.

CAW has been in discussion with WBC over its Tree Policy in Conservation Areas and the wider public domain. Complications and much confusion by all concerned – is there or is there not a Tree Policy? A blanket TPO over all Conservation Areas – could this be justified? Lead Officer in planning, Matthew Parry Davies, has been asked by David Ball to cost out having the process digitised. This would clearly assist in the processing of the system by more than one officer; namely, at present, Erik Bowman, Wirral's Tree Officer.

On a positive note, we are needless to say delighted to inform everyone that the War Memorials in Prenton Lane are about to be listed. Celebrations and a re-dedication of the monuments and surrounding gardens. We were equally thrilled that, having supported residents within our Conservation Area, in opposition to the Storeton Hall Application, it was thankfully, unanimously rejected.

e) Gillian Bolt told the meeting about a community project that she has undertaken to get interpretation boards up in Clifton Park CA – informing people of the area's unique historic aspects. Children from the Woodlands primary school are involved as well as guides & scouts from the Deen Mosque. Their work will be displayed in the Masonic Temple on 9 September during the Heritage Open Days event and then some of it can be included onto the interpretation panels. A bid will be put into the Big Lottery fund and we also have Wirral Council support for the installation costs.

CAW are also pushing Wirral Council to install CA signage around Clifton Park and Gillian has just received an email regarding arranging a meeting with Shaun Brady to take the matter further.

f) Lizzie Heywood told the meeting about the new Management Plan they were working on for the Estate. They are also having a landscape survey done plus a survey of all their listed properties (they have more than 900 listed buildings).

Questions/comments:

1 Philip Barton reminded people that the Birkenhead Neighbourhood Planning consultation had recently taken place, which included Clifton Park, and CAW could still make comments if they wished to.

4 Treasurer's Report

John Pyke had circulated copies of the Accounts previously and thanked the societies that had donated last year to the CAW fund. Although CAW's finances looked reasonably healthy, if we should need to take expert advice on anything, it would probably use up all our funds and more. John will be sending out his "begging" letter in the near future and hoped that societies would donate as they felt able.

He also thanked Sonia Oldershaw for auditing the accounts for him.

The Accounts were approved: Proposed by Peter Bolt and Seconded by Alan Thomson. Unanimously carried.

5 Committee Members

Four members of the committee were up for re-election: Alan Chape, David Allan, Elizabeth Davey, Peter Bolt whilst Gillian Bolt also needed to be elected as she was currently co-opted. Chris Moore has stood down due to increasing commitments elsewhere.

There were no other nominations and John Pyke asked if the members could be proposed 'en bloc'.

Proposed by: Chris Moore, seconded by John Moffat. Unanimously carried.

6 Open Forum

i) Mrs Rafferty (Barnston) commented that she had not received any notice or papers for the meeting. We apologised and said we would re-visit our procedures to ensure it did not happen again. She also has grave concerns about the farm in Barnston which has been closed by the owner (who lives in Germany) and proposes to build on the footprint of the farm. The fields will presumably be rented out until such time as he hopes to get planning permission for building. They are in the green belt of course. She hoped that CAW and others would support them when planning applications came in.

ii) Vince Clegg (Heswall) said they would be keen to liaise with Barnston over the developments on the farm. They were also seeking listing for the old police station in Heswall as it is now up for sale and could face demolition.

iii) John Moffat also commented that he had not received any AGM papers and also talked about some of the walks they are doing around Flaybrick and the Mary Ann Mercer grave.

iv) Chris Moore (retiring from the CAW committee)(Kings Gap), thanked CAW committee members for their work. Chris also commented about the frustration and difficulty CAW faces due to the lack of timely responses and/or apparent inaction of the Council officers.

v) Philip Barton (Hamilton Square) talked about the difficulty of liaising with absentee landlords in Hamilton Square. They have a particular issue with one lady who lives in Ireland and refuses to engage with the Friends of HS whilst allowing the building to deteriorate. The Management Plan delay was also highlighted and Gillian Bolt read out the email from David Ball which stated that a draft brief would be available for comment on 30 April 2018.

vi) John Moffat (Flaybrick) also thanked CAW members for their work and support for CA's generally.

7 Alan Chape closed the formal AGM meeting and introduced Rod Tann, Chairman of The Wirral Society, who is celebrating 90 years since the Society was formed.

Rod showed some fascinating pictures of Wirral population maps through time and also old buildings and street scenes that had changed over the years as well as mentioning some of the campaigns that the Society had waged to stop inappropriate and thoughtless development.

Alan Chape thanked Rod for his insightful and fascinating talk and then thanked all those present for coming.

The meeting closed.

Gillian Bolt

22 April 2018